

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 134
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS MONTREAL 0454

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: QUEBEC LIBERAL LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN -END OF PHASE ONE

1. CLAUDE RYAN AND RAYMOND GARNEAU MET SUNDAY FOR THE LAST OF NINE INTRA-PARTY DEBATES DESIGNED FAMILIARIZE THE PROSPECTIVE DELEGATES TO APRIL LEADERSHIP CONVENTION WITH THEIR VIEWS AND STYLES. AUDIENCE ESTIMATED AT 3500 - 4000.

2. NEITHER BROKE NEW GROUND SUBSTANTIVELY, RYAN STILL CALLING FOR GREATER CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THAN GARNEAU, LATTER GIVING GREATEST EMPHASIS TO NEED FOR IMPROVED ECONOMY WHICH CAN ONLY COME ABOUT BY RESOLVING UNITY QUESTION.

3. GARNEAU SCORED FIRST BY DEVOTING EARLY PART OF SPEECH TO POLL PUBLISHED THAT MORNING (SEPTEL) WHICH SHOWED LIVERALS AHEAD OF PARTI QUEBECOIS (PQ) FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1976 ELECTION. NONETHELESS, CGS QUEBEC AND MONTREAL, WHO ATTENDED, FELT RYAN DREW MORE OVERALL SUPPORT FROM GATHERING, DESPITE SOME 25 BUSLOADS OF SUPPORTERS BROUGHT FROM ALL OVER THE PROVINCE BY GARNEAU FORCES.

4. WITH ONE EXCEPTION, ENTIRE SERIES OF MEETINGS HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY GENTLEMANLY SPARRING, IN INTEREST OF MINIMIZING PARTY FRACTURING. NEITHER REFERS TO OTHER AS
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" OPPONENT" BUT AS "THE OTHER CANADIDATE" -- "OPPONENT IS THE PQ." THIS HAS TENDED ALSO MINIMIZE POLICY DIFFERENCES AND LIVELINESS OF CONFLICT. DESPITE THIS, MOST STRIKING ASPECT OF LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN RESUSCITATION OF LIBERAL PARTY MORALE. PICKUP STARTED WITH POLICY CONVENTION IN NOVEMBER. SUNDAY GATHERING DOWNRIGHT EBULLIENT.

5. PHASE TWO -- COURTING CONVENTION DELEGATES ALREADY ELECTED
OR FIRING UP SLATES IN RIDINGS WHERE ELECTION HAS NOT YET
OCCURRED IS NEXT STEP IN THE PROCEEDINGS. AS NOTED EARLIER
REPORTS, HOWEVER, RYAN APPEARS HAVE SOLID LEAD AT THIS TIME.
HARPER

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